

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF TENNESSEE
NASHVILLE DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
) No. 3:22-cr-00282
v.)
) JUDGE RICHARDSON
[1] GLEN CASADA)
[2] CADE COTHREN)

NOTICE OF UNOPPOSED SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The United States, through Assistant United States Attorney Taylor J. Phillips and Trial Attorneys John P. Taddei and Blake J. Ellison, submit the following summary of the case. The government has conferred with the defense and understands that Defendants do not oppose the following summary of the case being read to the jury.

The following is a summary of the indictment. Neither the indictment nor this summary is any evidence at all of guilt. The indictment is just the formal way that the government tells the defendant what crime he is accused of committing. It does not even raise any suspicion of guilt.

Defendants Glen Casada and Cade Cothren have been indicted for bribery, honest-services fraud, obtaining State property by fraud, money laundering, and conspiracy.

The government alleges that in 2019, Casada served as Speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives. Cothren served as Casada's chief of staff. In May 2019, Cothren resigned due in part to allegations of misconduct that were published in the media. A few months later, Casada also resigned his post as Speaker based in part on those allegations, but he remained a House member.

The government further alleges that beginning around October 2019, Casada, Cothren, and Robin Smith, another House member, entered into an agreement to obtain State funds through Phoenix Solutions—a company that Cothren formed after his resignation—through bribery and fraud. The conspirators agreed that Casada and Smith would use their offices to pressure various State officials to take official actions which ultimately benefitted the conspirators and that, in exchange, Cothren paid Casada and Smith kickbacks.

The government alleges that the conspirators concealed Cothren's involvement in Phoenix Solutions and the fact that he paid a portion of the company's profits to his co-conspirators. They understood that, if anyone knew about Cothren's involvement or the kickbacks, Phoenix Solutions would not be approved by the State to be vendor, nor would it be hired by individual members of the Tennessee General Assembly.

The government alleges that, instead, the conspirators told State officials that Phoenix Solutions was run by a man named Matthew Phoenix, who they falsely held out to be an experienced political consultant. In truth, Matthew Phoenix never existed. Casada and Smith pitched Phoenix Solutions to their colleagues, and the conspirators successfully tricked others into believing that Phoenix Solutions was run by Matthew Phoenix.

The government alleges that over the course of 2020, the conspirators received more than \$50,000 from the State in payments related to the Postage and Printing Allowance. During the same timeframe, Cothren paid Casada and Smith thousands of dollars that the government alleges were bribes and kickbacks.

The government alleges that the conspirators also agreed to use Casada's company, Right Way Consulting, and Smith's company, Rivers Edge Alliance, to conceal the nature, location, source, ownership, and control of the proceeds of the bribery and fraud. The government also alleges that the conspirators engaged in monetary transactions in criminally derived property valued at more than \$10,000.

Casada and Cothren have entered pleas of not guilty to all charges and deny that they committed any crime.

Respectfully submitted,

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